

THE  
**Delphick Oracle ;**

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**SCHOLARS**

In the most FAMOUS  
UNIVERSITIES of EUROPE:  
FOR THE  
Advancement of *Divine* and  
*Human* LEARNING.

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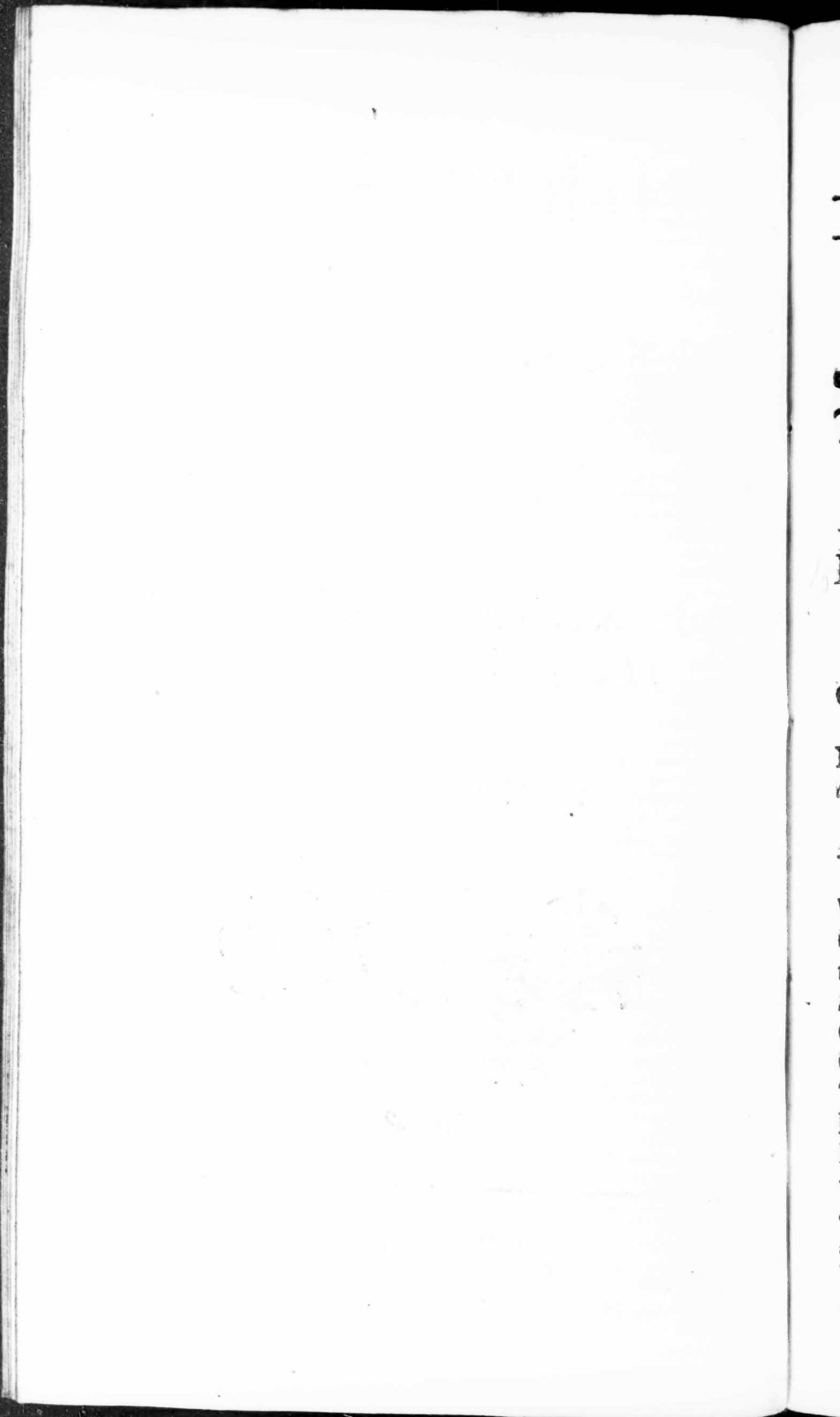
For the MONTH of *November*, 1719.

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THE

# Delphick Oracle.

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LONDON, November 7th, 1719.

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Question. **O**F what Authority (*learned Gentlemen*) is that Part of the Scriptures call'd the New Testament, of which some of my Acquaintance, atheistically inclin'd, seem to doubt?

Answer. **F**OR the Authority of the Books of the *New Testament*, we say then, the Writings, of which there is no doubt among *Christians*, and which bear a certain Name, are that Writer's whose Name they carry; and *Tertulian* a most reverend and learned Father of the Church (*de Præscript. Hæret.*) says, the very original Copies of some Books were extant even in his Time: And that all Churches have received those Books as such, before any general Synods were held: Neither have the *Pagans*, or *Jews*, ever moved a Controversy, as if they were not the Works of those to whom they were ascribed. Nay, *Julian* the Apostate, confess'd, that they are the Writings of *Peter*, *Paul*, *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, which go under their Names. That *Homer* and

A 2 *Virgil*

*Virgil* are Authors of the Books stiled theirs, no Man in his right Mind doubts, by reason of the perpetual Testimony of the *Greeks* for the one, and the *Latins* for the other; how much more then, ought we, concerning the Authors of these our Books, to stand to the Testimony of almost all the Nations of the World. There are indeed, some Books in that Volume which we now use, not alike received from the Beginning, as the Second of *Peter*, the Epistle of *James*, and *Jude*, two under the Name of *John* the Elder, the *Apocalypse*, and the Epistle to the *Hebrews*: Yet so, that they were acknowledged by many Churches, as appears by the antient *Christians*, who use their Testimonies for sacred. Whence it is credible, the Churches, who had not those Books at first, were ignorant, or doubted of them at that Time; but afterward upon better Information, began to use them after the Example of the rest, as now we see it generally done. Also there is no Reason, why one should discredit the Epistle to the *Hebrews* for this Cause alone, that the Writer of it is not known; nor the two Epistles of *John*, nor the *Apocalypse*, for that some doubt, whether the Writer of them be *John* the Apostle, or another of that Name. For in Writers, the Quality, rather than the Name is observed: Therefore, we receive many Books of History whose Writers we know not. So seeing the Writers of our Books shew themselves, both to have lived in the first Age, and to have been endu'd with Apostolical Gifts, this may be good Satisfaction for us. For, to say these Qualities might be feign'd, and in other Writings the Names also, is to say, a Thing incredible; namely, that these Persons, who every where press upon us the Love of Truth and Godliness, would without any Cause be guilty of the Crime of Falshood; which is not only detestable among all good Men, but

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was also by the *Roman* Laws punish'd with Death, as you may read in the End of *Valerius Maximus*.

Wherefore, it must be confest, that the Books of the New-Testament were written by them whose Names they bear, or by them, who were such as they shew themselves : To which, if we add, that, which is not to be doubted of, that the Things which they wrote were known to them, and that they had no Design to deceive us ; it will follow, that the Things which they have written are true : Because, all Falshood must proceed either from Ignorance, or from an evil Will. *Matthew, John, Peter, Jude*, were of the Company of those Twelve whom *Jesus* chose for Witnesses of his Life and Doctrine : So that Knowledge of what they relate could not be wanting to them. The same may be said of *James*, who either was an Apostle, or, as others will, the next Kinsman of *Jesus*, and by the Apostles constituted Bishop of *Jerusalem*. *Paul* also would not through Ignorance be mistaken in those Doctrines which he professes revealed to him by *Jesus* himself reigning in Heaven : Nor could he be more mistaken in the Things acted by himself, or *Luke* either, his individual Companion in his Journeys. The same *Luke* might easily know the Things he penn'd, of the Life and Death of *Jesus*, being born near unto the Place, having also travell'd through *Palestine* ; where he saith, he had Conference with such as had been Eye-Witnesses of those Affairs. No doubt, other Persons also, many besides the Apostles with whom he had Friendship, who had been healed by *Jesus*, and had beheld him dying and risen again, were then alive. If we give Credit to *Tacitus* and *Suetonius* in those Matters which happen'd long before they were born, because we are confident of their diligent Enquiry ; how much more reasonable is it,

to believe that Writer who affirms, he had his Intelligence from the Men that had seen all Things with their Eyes. *Mark*, 'tis a constant Fame, was a faithful Companion of *Peter*, so that the Things he penn'd, are to be accounted of, as the Dictates of *Peter*, who could not be ignorant of them; not to say, that what he writes is almost extant in the Writings of the Apostles. Neither could the Writer of the *Apocalypse* be deceiv'd in those Visions, which, he saith, were given him from Heaven; or he to the *Hebrews* in the Things which he professes to have learn'd, either from the Spirit of God, or from the Apostles themselves. But had they been unfaithful in the least, they would not have recorded their own Faults unto Posterity; namely, the Flight of them all in the time of their Master's Danger, and *Peter's* three Denials. On the contrary, their Fidelity is approv'd by illustrious Testimonies of God himself, that is, by Miracles. These were, with great Boldness, publicly asserted by themselves, or their Disciples; adding the Names of Persons and Places, and other Circumstances; so that the Verity or Fallity of their Asseveration might by Inquisition of the Magistrates, most easily be detected. Among which Miracles 'tis worthy Observation, what, of the Use of Languages, which they had not learn'd, before many thousands, in the Sight of the People suddenly cured, they have most constantly declar'd. Nor did it deter them, that they knew, the *Jewish* Officers, in those Times were their deadly Enemies, and the *Roman* none of their Friends; who would have omitted no Occasion of disgracing them with any Crime, whom they looked upon as the Authors of a new Religion. But, neither *Jews* nor *Pagans*, in the nearest Times, ever durst deny Miracles to have been wrought by the Hands of these Men. Besides, in  
their



their Books are many Predictions of Things, which Men, of themselves, could not have known; which by the Event it self are strangely confirm'd; as of the sudden and great Propagation of this Religion, of its perpetual Duration, of the Rejection thereof by the most Part of the *Jews*, and its Entertainment among the *Gentiles*; of the *Jews* Hatred against the Profession of *Christianity*, of the grievous Persecutions to be suffer'd for the same; of the Siege and Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Temple, and the extreme Calamities of the *Jewish* Nation. Moreover, if we believe, God hath a Care of human Affairs, and especially of those which pertain to his own Honour and Worship, it cannot be that he should suffer so great a Multitude of Men who had no other Purpose but his holy Service, to be abused with false and deceitful Writings.

*Q. Of what Religion was the Duke of Buckingham, who was stabb'd at Portsmouth by Felton?*

*A.* We will not presume to declare what was a Man's Faith, living many Years before we were born; but give the Propounder of this Question leave to guess at it by the Sequel of what we are going to relate. When the Duke of *Buckingham* was willing to begin a sudden War with *Spain*, he projected to sell the Crown-Lands to maintain it; and charged the Earl of *Bristol* to advise *Charles* Prince of *Wales*, with whom his Greatness was increasing, but waining with the King, to temporize in his Religion. In this Juncture, *Dr. Preston*, a Chaplain to the Prince, and highly countenanced by the *Scots* of his Highness's Bed-Chamber, because he prosecuted the Endeavours of their Country-man *Knox*, applies to the Duke; and tho' he did not mention to his Grace the Extirpation of Bishops, the King having lately said in the Conference at *Hampton-Court*, *No Bishop, no King*; yet he



he advis'd his Grace, for his Safety-sake, to gain the Love of the People, by becoming a warm and zealous *Christian*, and employing himself strenuously to lop from off this half Reformed Church of *England* the superfluous Branches of *Romish* Superstition; as Cathedral and Collegiate Services, and their Appendages, which were maintain'd with great Wealth to feed lazy Drones: Whereas all their Chanting and Pomp hindred the heavenly Power and Simplicity of Prayer, and farther'd not the Preaching of the Gospel. But the Lands of these Chapters escheating to the Crown by Dissolution, will pay the King's Debts, and supply the Wants of his Grace's Kindred and Dependants: Hereby his Grace will be the Favourite of the godly People, and will be able to oblige his Enemies. Now the Duke being pleas'd with this Project, ordering the Doctor to come frequently to him, and accordingly he waited on him in his Bed-Chamber thrice a Week; we can no otherwise suppose, than that if his Grace had any Religion at all in him, it was pinn'd on his Sleeve.

*Q. Have Liturgies been antiently us'd? If they were, pray Gentlemen tell us, who those Persons were that compil'd the Book of Common-Prayer, now us'd in the Church of England?*

*A. That Liturgies have been antiently us'd in the Church, is evident, from the Usage of them among the Jews themselves. For several liturgical Forms were compos'd by Esdras and the great Synagogue; and they in their antient Liturgies, were wont, in their solemn Confession of their Sins, to read several Chapters of the Mosaical Law and the Prophets, to pray for God's Blessing on their People; and in the Close of their Devotion, the Ruler of the Synagogue us'd to dismiss them with a solemn Benediction. And that our Saviour compos'd the Lord's Prayer to be a Form to be constantly*

stantly us'd by the *Christians*, and that it was in Fact made use of so in the publick Assemblies of the primitive or first *Christians*, many Fathers of the Church do testify. Moreover, those Prophecies or Singing of *Psalms* mention'd by St. *Luke*, in the 23d and 24th Verses in the 4th Chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*, is a certain Proof, that the *Christians* in the most early Times, made use of Set-Forms of Devotion; and they have continued ever since in Use among all Bodies of true *Christians*, both of the Eastern and Western Church; nay, and even among the two best Branches of the Reformation, those of the Church of *England*, and the *Lutherans*.

Now, the *Liturgy* which our established Church uses, (and which brings us to your second Question) is corresponding to the most antient Forms us'd by the *Greek* and *Latin* Professors of *Christianity*, in the most primitive and purest Times; and was compil'd in the Reign of *Edward* the Sixth, by Men no less noted for true Piety, than sound Learning; as *Thomas Crammer* Archbishop of *Canterbury*, *Thomas Goodrick* Bishop of *Ely*, *Henry Holbech* Bishop of *Winchester*, *George Day* Bishop of *Chichester*, *John Skip* Bishop of *Hereford*, *Dr. Thirlby* Bishop of *Westminster*, *Nicholas Ridley* Bishop of *Rochester*, *Richard Cox* Dean of *Christ-Church*, and Almoner to the King; *Dr. May* Dean of *St. Paul's*, *Dr. Taylor* Dean of *Lincoln*, *Dr. Haynes* Dean of *Exeter*, *Dr. Robinson* Arch-deacon of *Leicester*, *Dr. Redman* Dean of *Westminster*, and Master of *Trinity-College* in *Cambridge*. But Popery having been introduced again into *England*, in the Reign of *Queen Mary* the First, and the *Mass-Book* us'd instead of the *English Liturgy*; upon the coming of *Queen Elizabeth* to the Crown, Consultations were held by the *Protestants* about the Court, concerning the bringing in again the *English Service*; and



## 10      *The Delphick Oracle.*

in order to this, the following learned Divines were appointed to make a Review of the *Common-Prayer Book* set forth by King *Edward* the Sixth ; namely, Doctor *Matthew Parker*, Doctor *Richard Cox*, Doctor *May*, Doctor *Bill*, Doctor *James Pilkington*, Sir *Thomas Smith*, Mr. *David Whitehead*, Mr. *Edmund Grindal*, Doctor *Edwyn Sands*, and Mr. *Edmund Gaest*. Before the Reformation the *Liturgy* was only in *Latin* : being a Collection of Prayers, made up partly of some antient Forms us'd in the Primitive Church, and partly some others of a later Original, accommodated to the Superstitions which had crept into the *Romish* Church in the middle Ages ; and the *Latin* Services which were mostly us'd here in *England*, for near 300 Years before the Reformation, were compos'd by *Osmund* Bishop of *Salisbury*, a Man well vers'd in Rituals, or liturgical Learning, about the Year of our Lord 1080 ; and were thought to be done with that Exactness, according to the Rules of the Church of *Rome*, that many Churches abroad likewise entertain'd 'em. Now these *Latin* Prayers being established by the Laws of the Land, and the Canons of the Church, no others could be publickly made use of ; so that those of the Laity, who had not the Advantage of a learned Education, could not with Edification join in them ; and besides, they being mixt with Addresses to the Saints, Adoration to the Host, Images, and other Trumpery, contrary to the Rules of our *Rubrick*, the Worship was in it self idolatrous and prophane. Moreover, the Pretence of the *Papists* to have the Common-Prayer of the Church in an unknown Tongue, is one of the most impudent Crimes of all those many which that Religion abounds with. For this is not only directly contrary to the Doctrine of St. *Paul*, concerning the Unprofitableness of making  
use

## The Delphick Oracle. 11

use of a Tongue in the publick Assemblies, which the People do not understand, but is contrary to the Practice of the best and earliest Times of the Church. *Liturgies* being in the *Greek* and *Latin* Languages, must needs be understood by all *Greece* and *Italy*; and those Nations where those Tongues were spoken, which was the far greatest Part of of the then known World. The *Syrians*, *Æthiopians*, *Armenians*, and other Nations, have *Liturgies* in their Mother Tongue to this Day. It is recorded, that at the Funeral of *Paula* in *Palestine*, the *Christians* of the several Languages in that Country sang *Psalms* in their Mother-Tongue: Nay, so late as the 10th Century, the Church of *Rome* had not the Confidence to declare against the Use of the vulgar Tongue; for a certain Bishop of *Moravia*, having converted a great Part of that People to the *Christian* Faith, desired of the Pope, that he might perform divine Offices in the *Sclavonian* Language, for which he obtain'd a Dispensation.

As concerning the insignificant Exceptions which are made by our Sects against Ceremonies, we shall here take the Opportunity of shewing from whence the Word has its Derivation, and next their Folly in so acting. The Word *Ceremony* is of *Latin* Original, tho' some of the best *Criticks* in Antiquity are divided in their Opinions, in assigning from what Word in that Tongue it took its Name. *Valerius Maximus* says, that it was so call'd from *Cære*, a Town in *Italy*, where the *Vestals* had a safe Retreat, when the City of *Rome* was sackt by the *Gauls*. *Inde enim institutum est, sacra caeremonias vocari, quia Cæretani ea, in fracto reipublicæ statu, perinde ac florente, coluerunt.* Lib. i. cap. i. *Gellius*, in the 9th Chapter of the 4th Book of *Noctes Atticæ*, derives it à *carendo*, from wanting. *Macrobius* inclines to the same Opinion, saying,



## 12      *The Delphick Oracle.*

*Religio à relinquendo ut à carendo Cæremonia.* Saturnal.  
 l. 3. c. 3. And others contend, that the Word  
 takes its Rise from the Goddess *Ceres*, upon which  
 Account *Ceremoniaca* is explain'd by *ἀνμῆσις*. The  
*Christians* have adapted the Word to signify external  
 Rites and Customs in the Worship of God; which,  
 tho' they are not of the Essence of Religion, yet they  
 contribute much to the Decency thereof, to Conve-  
 nience, good Order, and Uniformity in the Church.  
 Now, though a Multitude of them do clog and  
 choak the vital Part of Religion, yet some few de-  
 cent external Orders, though of human Institution,  
 do help to keep up the Dignity of Religion, and  
 preserve it from Contempt in the Eyes of the Vul-  
 gar, whose Minds are not apt to have always the  
 highest Regards to the internal Excellence thereof.  
 For if there were no Ornament in the Church, and  
 prescript Order of Administration, the common  
 People would hardly be perswaded to shew more  
 Reverence in the publick Assemblies, than in other  
 ordinary Places, where they meet only for Business  
 or Diversion. But notwithstanding this, some gid-  
 dy-headed *Dissenters* have laid it down, that no  
 Ceremony, or human Constitution, is justifiable,  
 but what is exprelly warranted in the Word of God.  
 This they have pretended to reduce into a Syllo-  
 gistical Demonstration thus: *Wheresoever Faith is*  
*wanting, there is Sin. In every Action not commanded,*  
*there is Sin.* But the Falsity of this Syllogism is  
 plainly confuted from this Apostolical Injunction:  
*Let all things be done with Decency, and in Order.*  
 Which Text is a much better Demonstration, for  
 proving that the Church has a Power to enjoin  
 proper Ceremonies, for the good Order and Come-  
 linefs of Ecclesiastical Conventions. In fine, our  
*Liturgy* is a Book that, next to the inspired Vo-  
 lumes of the Holy Scriptures, of all the Compo-  
 sitions in the World, the best of *Christians* have the  
 greatest



greatest Value for : Nay, the first Compilers thereof seal'd it with their Blood, as being more perfect and more agreeable to God's Word, and to Primitive Practice, than any that is to be found throughout the whole diffusive Body of *Christ's* Catholick Church.

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LEYDEN, Nov. 9th, N. S. 1719.

Q. **I**S the Freedom of a Common-wealth, whether Monarchical or Popular, still the same?

A, No ; for the Liberty of the *Athenians*, and the *Romans*, was a Liberty only to be found in Popular Estates, and not in Monarchies. This is clear'd by *Aristotle*, who calls a City a Community of Freemen, meaning every particular Citizen to be free. Not that every particular Man had a Liberty to resist his Governour, or do what he list ; but a Liberty only for particular Men, to govern and be governed by Turns : ἀρχεν and ἀρχεσαι are *Aristotle's* Words ; this was a Liberty not to be found in Hereditary Monarchies. So *Tacitus* mentioning the several Governments of *Rome*, joins the Consulship and Liberty to be brought in by *Brutus*, because, by the annual Election of Consul, particular Citizens came in their Course to govern, and to be govern'd.

Q. What is your Opinion, Gentlemen, of Infant-Baptism?

A. For our Part, we acquiesce in this Point to the Authority of the Church, to whom God hath given the Sacraments, and some Right over them. There was a Time when the *Eucharist* was given to Infants: The Custom is vanish'd, yet not as absurd, but unnecessary. To defer Baptism till ripe Years,

## 14      *The Delphick Oracle.*

Years, was in old Time left at Liberty. Now the Observation is otherwise ; and yet even now there is no certain Time of receiving *Baptism* defined by the Church. Here is nothing against the Scripture. Great hath always been the Liberty of the Church, in the Time, Place, and Manner of such Things. There are some lately born that believe otherwise ; yet themselves neither baptize the Persons naked, nor dip them under Water, which is signified by the Word βαπτίζειν, to plunge under that liquid Element.

*Q. What is the Signification of the Word Tyrant ?*

*A.* A *Tyrant* is he, who regarding neither Law nor the common Good, reigns only for himself and his Faction : Or to speak still more significantly, he is a *Tyrant* who looks only after his own, and not his People's Profit ; or not to regard the common Good, but to reign only for himself. However, the Word *Tyrant* has been formerly us'd for a King in a good Sense ; but after such time as the Cities of *Greece* practised to shake off Monarchy, then, and not till then (which was after *Homer's* Time) the Name of *Tyrant* was taken up for a Word of Infamy and Disgrace, for such Men as, by Craft or Force, wrested the Power of a City, from a Multitude to one Man only ; and not for the exercising, but for the ill obtaining of the Government. But now every Man that is thought to govern ill, is term'd a *Tyrant*, and so truly judg'd by his Subjects.

*Q. Of what Authority is the holy Bible, or Book of the Old-Testament ?*

*A.* The Persons whose Names they bear, were either Prophets, or Men most worthy of Belief ; such as *Esdras* also was, who is said to have collected them into one Volume, at what Time there yet liv'd these Prophets, *Haggai*, *Malachi*, and *Zachary*. The first and latter Part of the History  
of



of *Moses*, hath many of the *Pagans* to give Witness to it. So the Names of *David* and *Solomon*, and the Leagues of the *Tyrians*, *Josephus* tells us in the 8th Book of his *Antiquities*, were mention'd in the *Phenician Annals*; and the same Author says, in the 10th Book thereof, That *Nebuchadnezzar*, and other *Chaldean Kings*, are remembred by *Berosus*, no less than by the *Hebrew Books*. *Vapres*, King of *Egypt*, to *Jeremiah*, according to the *Septuagint Translation*, is *Apries* to *Herodotus*. And the Books of the *Grecians* are full of *Cyrus*, and his Successors unto *Darius*. Many other Matters pertaining to the *Jewish Nation*, are alledg'd by *Josephus* in his Books against *Appian*. But as for us *Christians*, there is no Reason at all, that we should doubt of the Truth of those Books, when in our own Books are extant, out of almost every of them, Testimonies which are likewise found in the *Hebrew*. Nor did *Christ*, when he reprehended very many things in the Doctors of the Law, and the *Pharisees* of his Time, ever accuse them of Falsimony committed against the Books of *Moses* or the Prophets; or that they used supposititious or corrupted Books. That the Scripture was corrupted since the Times of *Christ*, in Things of Moment, cannot be prov'd; nor will it be made credible, if one well consider, how far and wide was dispersed the Nation of the *Jews*, the Keepers of those Books every where. For first the ten Tribes were, by the *Assyrians*, carried away unto *Media*, two afterwards, and of these also many, after the Return granted to *Cyrus*, sat still in foreign Lands. The *Macedonians*, by great Commodities, invited them to *Alexandria*. The Cruelty of *Antiochus*, the Civil Wars of the *Asmoneans*, and the External of *Pompey* and *Sofias*, dissipated many. *Cyrenaica* was full of *Jews*: Full were the Cities of *Asia*, *Macedonia*, *Lycaonia*; the Islands also of *Cyprus*, *Crete*, and other Places:

Places: And at Rome, how great their Number was, we may learn out of *Horace*, *Juvenal* and *Martial*.

—————ac veluti te

*Judæi cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.*

Serm. l. 1. Sat. 4.

*Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges,  
Judaicum ediscunt, & servant, ac metuunt jus,  
Tradidit arcano quodcunque volumine Moses.*

Sat. 14.

*Nec recutitorum fugis inguina Judæorum.*

Lib. 7. Epig. 29.

No Art was able to impose upon Companies so far distant from each other; nor was it more possible for them to agree upon deceiving us. Add, that about 300 Years before *Christ*, by the Care of the Kings of *Egypt*, the Books of the *Hebrews* were turn'd into the *Greek Tongue* by those who are call'd the *Septuagint*: So that now they were possessed by the *Grecians*, though in another Language, yet upon the Matter, in the same Sense, and therefore were they less capable of any Change. Moreover, into the *Chaldee*; and then follow'd other Versions into the *Greek*, in which could be found no Diversity of the Story, or Things of Weight. *Philo* flourish'd in the Age of *Caligula*; *Josephus* lived till the Times of *Vespasian*: Both of them cite those Places of the *Hebrew Books*, which we also at this Day read. And in their Times the *Christian Religion* began to be spread more and more; the Professors whereof, many were *Hebrews*, many had learned the *Hebrew Tongue*, to whom therefore it was easy, if any false Dealing had been used by the *Jews* in any notable Part, to apprehend it, by comparing the most antient Copies, and to lay the same open to the World: But they do not only do that,  
but



but also alledge very many Testimonies out of the *Bible* or *Old Testament* plainly in that Sense wherein they are extant among the *Hebrews*; which *Hebrews*, certainly, you may convince sooner of any Crime, than, we will not say of Falshood, but even of Negligence about these Books, they being us'd to write out and compare them with a most religious Care, so that they number the very Letters, how often every one is met with. In the last Place, we may add this Argument, not the least, to prove the Scripture hath not been corrupted on purpose by the *Jews*; because the *Christians*, out of the same Books which the *Jews* read, do evince, and that as they believe, strongly, that their Lord and Master *Jesus* is that *Messias*, who was of old promised to the Ancestors of the *Jews*; which, above all things, the *Jews* would have prevented, since the Difference between them and the *Christians* arose, had it ever been in their Power to alter what they pleas'd.

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DUBLIN, Novemb. 12th, 1719.

Q. DID a general Community, or having all Things in Common, come in with the Creation, or the Flood?

A. The Doctrine of *Grotius* (*de Jure Belli ac Pacis*) is, that God, immediately after the Creation, did bestow upon Mankind in general, a Right over Things of an inferiour Nature; from whence it came to pass, that presently every Man might snatch what he would, for his own Use, and spend what he could; and such an universal Right was then, instead of Property; for what every Man so catch'd, another could not take from him, but by Injury.



ry. But this Assertion is repugnant to the Truth of Holy Scripture, which says, *Adam*, by Donation from God, *Gen. i. 28.* was made the general Lord of all things, not without such a private Dominion to himself, as (without his Grant) did exclude his Children: And by Donation and Affignation, or some kind of Cession (before he was dead, or left any Heir to succeed him) his Children had their distinct Territories by Right of private Dominion. *Abel* had his Flock, and Pastures for them; *Cain* had his Fields of Corn, and the Land of *Nod*, where he built himself a City. As for the general Community between *Noah* and his Sons, which some will have to be granted to them, *Gen. ix. 2.* the Text doth not warrant it; for altho' the Sons are there mention'd with *Noah* in the Blessing, yet it may best be understood with a Subordination or a Benediction in Succession; the Blessing might truly be fulfilled, if the Sons, either under, or after their Father, enjoy'd a private Dominion, it is not probable, that the private Dominion which God gave to *Adam*, and by his Donation, Affignation, or Cession to his Children, was abrogated, and a Community of all things instituted betwixt *Noah* and his Sons, at the Time of the Flood: *Noah* was left the sole Heir of the World, Why should it be thought that God would disinherit him of his Birth-right, and make him of all the Men in the World, the only Tenant in common with his Children? If the Blessing given to *Adam*, *Gen. i. 28.* be compared to that given to *Noah*, *Gen. ix. 2.* there will be found a considerable Difference between those two Texts. In the Benediction of *Adam*, we find expressed a subduing of the Earth, and a Dominion over the Creatures, neither of which are expressed in the Blessing of *Noah*, nor the Earth there once named; it is only said, *The Fear of you shall be upon the Creatures, and into your Hands are they delivered*; then immediately

## The Delphick Oracle. 19

mediately it follows, *Every moving Thing shall be Meat for you, as the green Herb.* The first Blessing gave *Adam* Dominion over the Earth, and all Creatures, the latter allows *Noah* Liberty to use the living Creatures for Food: Here is no Alteration, or diminishing his Title to a Property of all things, but an Enlargement only of his Commons. But whether Community came in at the Creation, or at the Flood, 'tis no great Matter, since it did not long continue; and therefore it also seems strange, that *Grotius* should maintain, that Community of all things should be by the Law of Nature, of which God is the Author; and yet such Community should not be able to continue. Doth it not derogate from the Providence of God Almighty, to ordain a Community which could not continue? Or doth it not make the Act of our Forefathers, in abrogating the natural Law of Community, by introducing that of Propriety, to be a Sin of a high Presumption? The prime Duties of the second Table are conversant about the Right of Propriety; but if Propriety be brought in by a human Law, as *Grotius* teaches, then the moral Law depends upon the Will of Man. There could be no Law against Adultery or Theft, Women and all things were common.

*Q. Hearing, Gentlemen, what a great Controversy is now held in England, by the Presbyterian Teachers, about the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, some maintaining, and others denying it, What may be your Opinion of the Holy Trinity? And what sort of Creed might be compos'd, to make this great Mystery more intelligible than it is?*

*A.* We desire those Persons that are so disputatious about the holy *Trinity*, to consider the Greatness and Glory of those Natures about which they venture to argue and dispute with so much Freedom. If it was a common Subject, any Part of the natural



## 20      *The Delphick Oracle.*

tural World, or any created Being, we might make bold with our Fellow-Creatures, to canvass and examine all the Secrets of their Natures : But there is greater Caution and Reverence to be used as to the Divine Nature ; and especially as to the *Trinity*, which is the very Secret of the Divine Nature, and therefore should not be pry'd into further than it hath pleased God to reveal it. We should rather silently admire, and humbly submit to that Mystery, as it is delivered in the Words of Scripture, than add to it by our own Invention. The *Jews* had so great a Reverence for the Name of God, we mean the *TETRAGRAMMATON*, that they did not dare to pronounce it, nor take it into their Mouths, that being permitted only to the High-Priests, and but once a Year, when he enter'd into the *Sanctum Sanctorum* : This Name which was to them so sacred, was thought to express the absolute simple Nature of God, as he is in himself, without Respect, or antecedently to the whole Creation. This they justly accounted very holy and sacred, and plac'd it, as it were, in an inaccessible Light. Now the Notion of the *Trinity* does not only contain this, but exhibits also to us the great *Arcanum* of the Godhead, if we may so say, a most mysterious *Trinity* in the Divine Nature, which was never before reveal'd to Mankind, nor ever was, or will be comprehended by any Mortal. Ought we not then to place this in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, in the *Adytum* of the Temple, and cover it with the Wings of *Cherubims*, as a Glory too great for our Eyes to bear ? At least, we ought to be reserv'd, modest, and tender in this Point, more than in any other Part of *Theology*, of adding or innovating any thing beyond the plain Words and plain Sense of Scripture. Now as for what Creed we may, with Safety, propose concerning the ever-blessed *Trinity*, according to the plain Words and plain Sense of Scri-

Scripture, which is your other Question, we must ingenuously tell you, 'tis not for private Persons to prescribe or pretend to Authority against established Orders. But if you will give us Leave to put the Case in a new-found World, or in a Nation newly converted, and to be further in the *Christian* Faith; to such a People we would not propose the *Athanasian* Creed, but something more plain and simple, as also more scriptural, that should be manifestly grounded upon Divine Authority, in all the Parts of it. As suppose you should take so much of the Apostles Creed as relates to the *Trinity* and Incarnation, and add to it some Articles more explicite and distinct, to express our Belief in some such plain Form as follows,

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy-Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified by the Jews, rose from the Dead, ascended into Heaven, from whence he will come in Glory to judge the World. I believe the Holy Trinity, as it is revealed to us in Scripture: Accordingly I believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier: Three, after a mysterious and incomprehensible Manner, but One eternal ever-blessed Lord God; by whose Mercy, Power, and Faithfulness, I hope for a Resurrection from the Dead, and eternal Life.*

Thus much, we think, is unquestionably Scriptural; and we have left out the Word *Person*, not that we should scruple our selves in that large Sense wherein we understand it, but because we thought it would raise Scruples and Difficulties in the Minds of others, or of these new Converts, whereof we are speaking; they would be apt to reason with themselves, Can three Persons be one Thing?



Thing? Or can our God, who is One only God, be three distinct Persons? Are not three distinct Persons, each being infinitely perfect, plainly three Gods? These and such like Doubts would naturally rise in their Minds; and from these, as from Seeds, would grow up many more, which by Degrees, would corrupt the Simplicity of their Religion, and turn it into Opinions and Disputes. But this plain Scripture-Form, as it would prevent Disputes and Controversies, so it would render all *Dissenters* from it, if there could be any, inexcusable: We mean all *Christian Dissenters*; for as to *Jews* and *Mahometans*, we do not suppose that it would satisfy them; yet we think it would very much lessen that Offence which they take at the *Christian Trinity*, as it is dressed up in one of our Creeds, with all the Pomp and Affectation of Contrarieties and seeming Contradictions. Neither, we think, is this Form defective, tho' short and plain; for distinguishing Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; it thereby displays and casts a Light upon the whole *Christian Oeconomy*, and is a Support to our Faith and Prayer; Whereas those metaphysical Subtilties that are super-added to this Scripture-Creed, have no Influence, that we know, either upon a good Life, or any *Christian Duty*. All Parties agree in this solemn Maxim, that *there is but One God*. And not only *Christians* of all Sorts, but also *Jews* and *Mahometans* join with us in this, as the common Barrier betwixt us and Paganism and Polytheism. As to the Names of the *Trinity*, some will have them call'd three Substances; others three Persons; and others three Properties: But we think, however, it should not be Matter of Salvation and Damnation, to be right, or be mistaken in the Name or precise Notion of these three Things, whatsoever it is:



## The Delphick Oracle. 23

is: For every ingenuous and unbias'd Person must acknowledge, that there are great Difficulties in every one of the three Ways mentioned. So to conclude, we are of Opinion, but with all Submission to better Judgments, that the Doctrine of the *Trinity* cannot be made out in a rational way, according to the present Light of our Faculties. We do not doubt, but it is in the highest Reason to those Beings that are capable of it; but to us, in this present State, 'tis Matter of Faith, and we take it upon the Authority of a Revelation; and must acquiesce in that, without Additions of our own, if we would be secure from Error and Mistake.

*Q. Which of the Latin Poets was the best for writing occasional Poems?*

*A. Horace*, amongst the Antients, deservedly bears the Name from 'em all, for occasional Poems; many of which were address'd to *Pollio*, *Mecenas*, and *Augustus*, the greatest Men, and the best Judges, and all his Poetry over-look'd by them. This made him of the Temper not to part with a Piece over-hastily; but to bring his Matter to a Review, to cool a little, and think twice before it went out of his Hands. His poetical Performances were not wrote in his Youth, for at 32 Years of Age he had done no Wonders, nor had attain'd to that *curiosa felicitas*, which so fairly distinguish'd him afterwards. Neither had *Virgil* himself, at that Age, ventur'd out of the Woods, or attempted any thing beyond the *Rondels* and Conversation of *Damon* and *Amaryllis*.

*Q. Is there any such Place as Purgatory? And what is the Difference betwixt that Place of Purgation and Limbus patrum?*

*A. The Papists* affirm, that there is a certain infernal Place in the Earth call'd *Purgatory*, in which, as in a Prison, the Souls which were not  
fully

## 24      *The Delphick Oracle.*

fully purged in this Life, are there cleansed and purg'd by Fire, before they can be receiv'd into Heaven. The Proofs they alledge for it are, *I have sent forth thy Prisoners out of the Pit, wherein is no Water. Zech. ix. 11. We went through Fire and Water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy Place. Psal. lxxvi. 12.* Which first Text they would have to serve for *Purgatory* and *Limbus patrum* also; but *Purgatory* and *Limbus patrum* are diverse and contrary Things: For *Limbus patrum* was only for those (as some others of the learned *Papists* say) that liv'd before *Christ*, but *Purgatory* began since. *Limbus patrum* (as they confess) was void of Pain and Punishment; so is not *Purgatory*. Now as for the *Pit* without Water above-mentioned, we understand to be the dry and barren Dungeon of human Misery, where there is no Spring of Justice, but the Puddle and Mire of Iniquity, that is, the Prophet speaks of the Deliverance of the People from their cruel and unjust Bondage. Again, for the Defence of *Purgatory*, the *Papists* alledge these other Proofs, *Thou hast delivered my Soul from the lowest Hell. Psal. lxxxvi. 13. Every Mans Work shall be made manifest. For the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by Fire, and the Fire shall try every Mans Work of what sort it is. If any Mans Work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a Reward. If any Mans Work shall be burnt, he shall suffer Loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so, as by Fire. 1 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15.* From hence the *Papists*, by Fire, understand the Flames of *Purgatory*; by Wood, Stubble, Straw, they understand Sins, which must be purg'd by Fire. But by the precious Matter is not to be understood the Works of Charity, but the Preaching of sound Doctrine; by Straw, and other combustible Matter, is (in our Opinion) meant the Affectation of Eloquence, and corrupt teaching of the Truth; not venial Sins,



Sins, as they affirm. Moreover, Fire in this Place is taken allegorically; that is, by Resemblance, as the rest of the Words; neither can it be taken of their *Purgatory*, because it tries the Works only, not the Persons, as well the best Matter as the base. *The Day shall declare it*, that is to say, the Time shall declare it; for God hath appointed a Time, to examine every Man's Doctrine by Fire; which is nothing else, but the Judgment of God, by the Fire of his Word; whereby every Man in the Day of his Calling and Conversion shall know whether he hath preached right, or no. Indeed, we acknowledge no such Place, as *Purgatory*, as a third Place, but Heaven or Hell, according to the Scriptures. Our Purgation is in this Life, Afflictions, and Faith in the Blood of Christ. *The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.* 1 Joh. i. 7. The Blood of Christ purges your Conscience from dead Works, to serve the living God. Heb. ix. 14. We acknowledge but two Sorts of Men; good or bad; for God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccles. xii. 14. There is no middle or third Place; but he must needs be with the Devil, that is not with Christ. The third Place, besides Heaven and Hell, we are utterly ignorant of; Nay, we find not in Scripture, as above noted, that there is any. *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.* Rev. xiv. 13. Ergo, no *Purgatory*. After this Life there remains no Compunction, no Satisfaction. They which are once dead, can add nothing to the Things which they have done, but shall remain as they were left, and wait for the Time of the last Judgment. After the End of this Life, there is no Occasion of Merits, for Christ himself purged our Sins. Heb. i. 3.

## 26      *The Delphick Oracle.*

In fine, as the *Papists* themselves never agree of the Place, nor Continuance of Time, how long? We absolutely conclude, that their Doctrine in this Point is Anti-christian, condemn'd by Scripture, and all Antiquity and Fathers.

*Q. Was the Catechising of Children us'd before the Times of Christianity?*

*A.* A *Catechism*, which is deriv'd from a *Greek* Word, signifying to inculcate, or put into the Head of any Person, any thing that is taught him, has been used by the earliest Ages of the Church, as being of divine Institution, before Christianity was known; for in the *Old-Testament*, God by *Moses*, commands the *Jews* to teach his Laws diligently to their Children, *Deut. vi. 7.* And by *Solomon* he enjoins to *train up a Child in the Way he should go*, *Prov. xxii. 6.* So this general Practice of the *Jews* was imitated by the *Christians*, as all their other pious Usages were; and since our Saviour had also approv'd and commanded it in particular to *St. Peter*, he ordain'd *St. Mark* to be the first *Catechist* of *Alexandria*; and *Eusebius* in his *Ecclesiastical History* notes, that in the Year 181, when *Pantannus* was an Instructor of a School of young *Christians*, this Office had flourish'd there for a long Time.

*Q. Is the Custom of Ministers reading the Curses in Churches on Ash-Wednesday, of any long Continuance?*

*A.* The Penitential Office, call'd the *Communion*, or denouncing of God's Anger and Judgments against Sinners, was us'd in the Primitive Church in the Time of *Lent*, when they all fasted, and all repented in those Days. How publickly and solemnly Penance and Mortification was perform'd of old, as well in our own, as in foreign Churches, eminent Testimonies shew; for in *King Edgar's* Reign it was appointed, that on *Ash-Wednesday*, in the



the Beginning of *Lent*, every Bishop sitting in his Episcopal Chair, all the notorious Offenders of his Diocese shall come before him, and having confess'd their Faults, shall receive such Injunctions of Penance as their Sin requires; after this, on the *Thursday* before *Easter*, which we call *Maundy-Thursday*, they shall all be gathered in the same Place, and the Bishop singing some Hymns over them, shall give them Absolution, and grant them Leave to return home with his Blessing. And the Order of the *Gallican* Church was the very same, in that their Parish Priests shall make all their solemn Penitents come to the Cathedral Church, and on the *Thursday* before *Easter*, they shall come and be receiv'd into it again, which solemn Reception on that very Day, is as old in the Western-Church, as the Time of *Innocent* the First; and it's likely the Expulsion which preceeded it, is at least of the same Standing.

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GLASGOW, *Novemb.* 17th, 1719.

**Q.** *W* Herein lies the Immorality, Prophaneness, and Impiety of the English Stage?

*A.* In the immoral, profane, and impious Expressions us'd in the Dramatick Writings, whether Tragick, or Comical; insomuch, that the Play-houses can be reckon'd no other than Schools of Iniquity, the Sinks of all Wickedness, and Markets for the Devil. 'Tis out of doubt, but the Theaters, even of *Greece* and *Rome*, under Heathenism, were less obnoxious and offensive, yet nevertheless they stood condemn'd by the Primitive Fathers and General Councils. The detestable, lewd Expressions in the *English* Plays, can do no less than

## 28      *The Delphick Oracle.*

debauch the Minds, and corrupt the Manners of the Audience ; but it must needs strike every good *Christian* with Horror, to hear on the Stage, Almighty God blasphemed, his Providence question'd and denied, his Name prophaned, his Attributes ascrib'd to sinful Creatures, and even to Heathen Gods, his holy Word burlesqued, and treated as a Fable, his Grace made a Jest of, his Ministers despis'd, Conscience laugh'd at, Religion ridicul'd, the Catholick Faith and Doctrine expos'd, the sincere Practice of Religion represented as the Effect of Vapours and Melancholy, Virtue discountenanc'd, Vice encourag'd, Evil treated as Good, and Good as Evil ; and all this highly aggravated, by being done in cool Blood, upon Choice and Deliberation. The Infidelity and Looseness of the present Age is very much owing to the Play-Houses ; where the Infection of most abominable Wickedness spreads among the Spectators, from the Lady in the Side-Box, to the Chamber-maid in the Upper Gallery. Men and Women who frequent the Theater, are, instead of learning Virtue, surrounded with inordinate Temptations, which incite them to unlawful Desires and Actions, which soon end in the utter Ruin both of Body and Soul. Where Lewdness is represented in all the Dresses that can vitiate the Imagination, and fasten upon the Memory ; and where Pride and Falshood, Malice and Revenge, Injustice and Immodesty, Contempt of Marriage, and false Notions of Honour are recommended, no Good can be learn'd, either by old or young ; and this not among *Mahometans* and *Infidels*, not at *Rome* and *Venice* ; but in a *Protestant* Country, and upon the *English* Stage, without any Fear that the Judgments of God will fall upon them. The Players exposing (as they pretend to do) Formality, Humour, and Pedantry, is not an Equivalent for their insulting sacred Things,



## The Delphick Oracle. 29

Things, and their promoting to so high a Degree the Prophaneness and Debauchery of the Nation.

Those who frequent the Play-House, to palliate the Sin, say, a great deal of Morality is to be learnt from Plays; but we cannot perceive what good Morals can be obtain'd from such Expressions as these. "Sure, if Woman had been ready created, the Devil, instead of being kickt down into Hell, had been married. *Leonora's* Charms turn Vice to Virtue, Treason into Truth; Nature, who has made her the supreme Object of our Desires, must needs have design'd her the Regulator of our Morals. She's mad with the Whimsies of Virtue and the Devil. Damn'd Lies, by *Jupiter* and *Juno*, and the rest of the Heathen Gods and Goddesses; for I remember I paid two Guineas for swearing Christian Oaths last Night." As may be seen in the Comedies call'd, *The Provok'd Wife*, *False Friend*, *Modish Husband*, and *Different Widows*. However, the Admirers of the Stage must have some Excuse for their Folly; and thus too the Devil, to support Vice, hangs out the Colours of Virtue. Again, we cannot see what Morality can be learnt from these Expressions in the following Tragedies of *Oedipus*, *Oroonoko*, *Theodosius*, and *Cato*.

*Tho' round my Bed the Furies plant their Charms,  
I'll break 'em, with Jocasta in my Arms:  
Claspt in the Folds of Love, I'll wait my Doom;  
And act my Joys, tho' Thunder shakes the Room.*

Act 2.

*His own Gods damn him then. Act 5. Scen. last.  
Nor shall I need a Violence to wound;  
The Storm is here that drives me on the Ground,  
Sure Means to make the Soul and Body part,  
A burning Fever, and a broken Heart. Act 5. Scen. 2.*

*Has*

*Has not the Vow already past my Lips ?*

*The Gods have heard it, and 'tis seal'd in Heav'n.*

Act 3. Scen. 3.

In which Lines abovesaid may be seen the Lover pursuing his Amours in Defiance of Heaven; the hearty Curse of a *Blackmoor*; *Varanes* dying a natural Death, or else he had been so wicked, as to have laid violent Hands on himself; and *Lucia* so presumptuously sure as to affirm her Vow was seal'd above. Neither are the *Greek* and *Latin* Dramatists without their prophane Flights and wicked Rants: Nay, hear how *Augustin*, that great Father of the Church, in these Words, *Non omnino per hanc turpitudinem verba ista commodius discuntur, sed per hac verba turpitudine ista confidentius perpetratur*. Confes. lib. 1. cap. 16. condemns the following Lines of *Terence's Eunuch*, Act 3. Scen. 5.

*Suspectans tabulam quandam pictam, ubi inerat  
pictura hac; Jovem*

*Quo pacto Danae misisse aiunt quondam in gremium  
imbrem aureum.*

*Egomet quoque id spectare coepi, & quia consimilem  
luserat*

*Jam olim ille ludum, impendio magis animu'  
gaudebat mihi,*

*Deum sese in hominem convertisse, atque per alienas  
tegulas*

*Venisse clanculum per impluvium, fucum factum  
mulieri.*

*At quem Deum? qui templa coeli summa sonitu  
concutit.*

*Ego homuncio hoc non facerem? ego vero illud feci, ac  
lubens.*

In short, no good Manners can be acquir'd on the *English Stage*, by seeing an Actor sometimes going



going a Tip-toe, in Derision of mincing Dames ; sometimes speaking full-mouth'd, to mock the Country-Clowns ; and sometimes upon the Tip of the Tongue, to scoff the Citizen ; that thus, by the Imitation of all ridiculous Gestures or Speeches, in all Kinds of Vocations, they may provoke Laughter. When Stages were first set up in *Rome*, it was accounted infamous to frequent them ; and in *England*, Players, both Men and Women, are reckon'd so scandalous, that the Statute-Law terms them no better than Vagabonds ; indeed they are so infamously wicked, that one who never saw them in this Life, may nevertheless at the Resurrection, know their Bodies and Souls are Fellows. And hear what the first Council of *Arles* ordains, *De theatricis, & ipsos placuit, quandiu agunt, à communione separari.* Cap. 5. Which shews how much they were abhorred by good *Christians* even in the Time of *Constantine* the Emperor.

Q. *Is the Precept for observing the Sabbath, a Moral Commandment ?*

A. All that God wrote, were moral and perpetual Commandments, and these are reckon'd 10 in Number ; and because, in the Practice of this Commandment, the keeping of all the other consists, the God of Mercy mercilessly punishes the Breach thereof with cruel and untimely Death ; as tho' it were the Sum of his whole Honour and Service Thus *Nicanor* (as you may read in the 2d Book of the *Maccabees*, Ch. xv. 27, 28.) offering to fight against the *Jews* on the *Sabbath-Day*, was slain himself, and 35000 of his Men : But in the Histories of our own Country, you shall find ; divers Examples of this Kind inflicted on particular Sabbath-Breakers, as well as whole Towns. God placed this Commandment in the midst of the two Tables, because the keeping of it is the best Help to the keeping of all the rest : For the conscionable

scionable keeping of the *Sabbath*, is the Mother of all Religion, and good Discipline in the Church. Again, that the Observation thereof is moral, appears by God's commanding *Adam* to keep it in his Innocency; whilst (holding his Happiness, not by Faith in *Christ's* Merits, but by Obedience to God's Law) he needed no Ceremony shadowing the Redemption of *Christ*. A *Sabbath*, therefore, of a Seventh Day cannot be simply a Ceremony, but an essential Part of God's Worship, enjoin'd unto Man, when there was but one Condition of all Men. And if it was necessary for our first Parents to have a *Sabbath-Day*, to serve God in their Perfection; much more need their Posterity to keep the *Sabbath* in the State of their Corruption.

Now, the moral Law commands one Day of seven to be perpetually kept a *Sabbath*. And *Christ* himself expressly mentions the keeping of a *Sabbath* among his *Christians*, at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, about 42 Years after his Resurrection; by which Time, all the *Mosaical* Ceremonies (except eating of Blood, and Things strangled) were, by a publick Decree of all the Apostles, quite abolished and abrogated in *Christian* Churches. But the Observation of the *Sabbath* is no abrogated Ceremony, but a moral Commandment, establish'd by *Christ* among *Christians*. If you would know the Day whereupon *Christ* appointed *Christians* to keep the *Sabbath*, *St. John* will tell you, that it was upon the *Lord's Day*, *Apoc. i. 10*. If you will know on what Day of the Week that was, *St. Paul* will tell you, it was upon every first Day of the Week, *1 Cor. xvi. 2*. As we have hinted before, this Commandment of the holy *Sabbath* was instituted of God in the State of Innocency, when there was but one State of all Men; and therefore enjoin'd to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*: And seeing the *Gentiles* are bound to keep this Commandment as well



as well as the *Jews*, it is evident that it is no *Jewish* Ceremony. Again, as God, by a perpetual Decree, made the Sun, the Moon, and Lights in the Firmament of Heaven, not only to divide the Day from the Night, but also to be for Signs and for Seasons, and for Days, and for Years; so he ordain'd in the Church on Earth, the holy *Sabbath* to be not only the appointed Season for his solemn Worship; but also the perpetual Rule and Measure of Time: So that as 7 Days make a Week, 4 Weeks a Month, 12 Months a Year, so 7 Years make a *Sabbath* of Years, 7 *Sabbaths* of years a *Jubilee*, 80 *Jubilees*, or 4000 Years, or, after *Ezekiel*, 4000 Cubits, the whole Time of the *Old-Testament*, till *Christ*, by his Baptism and Preaching, began the State of the *New-Testament*. Most of all the great Alterations ('tis observ'd) which fell out in the Church, came to pass either in a Sabbatical Year, or in a Year of *Jubilee*: For Example, the 70 Weeks of *Daniel*, beginning in the 1st Year of *Cyrus*, and 3430th Year of the World, contain so many Years, as the World did Weeks of Years unto that Time, and so many Weeks of Years as the World had lasted *Jubilees*. The Year of our Saviour *Christ's* Birth was the 3948th of the World, and the 564th *Septennary* of the World. *Moses* makes the common Age of Men to be 10 times 7, *Psal.* xc. 10. And every 7th Year commonly produces some notable Change or Accident in a Man's Life; according this of *Gellius*: *Expertum est in plerisque omnibus 63 annum, cum periculo & clade aliqua venire, aut corporis morbique gravioris, aut vitæ interitus, aut animi aegritudinis.* Lib. 15. cap. 7. Therefore, when *Augustus* wrote to his Nephew *Caius*, he greatly rejoyc'd that he had pass'd the Climacterical Year, which contains 7 times 9. Moreover, the whole Church, by an universal Consent, ever since the Apostles Time, have still held the Command-

## 34      *The Delphick Oracle.*

ment of the *Sabbath*, to be the moral and perpetual Law of God ; and the keeping of the *Sabbath* on the first Day of the Week to be the Institution of *Christ* and his Apostles. The *Lord's Day* was the Birth-Day of the World, the first Day wherein all Creatures began to have Being ; in it Light was drawn out of Darkness, in it the Law was given on Mount *Sinai* ; in it the Lord arose from Death to Life ; in it the Saints came out of their Graves ; in it the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles : And it is very probable, that on the Seventh Day, when the 7 Trumpets have blown, the cursed *Jericho* of this World shall fall, and our true *Jesus* shall give us the promised Possession of the Heavenly *Canaan*. He that would see the uniform Consent, Antiquity and Practice of the Primitive Church in this Point, let him read *Eusebius's* Ecclesiastical History, *lib. 4. cap. 22.* and *Tertullian's* Book *de Idolatria, cap. 14.* The Cause of the Change of the *Sabbath* is the Resurrection of *Christ*, and the Benefit of the restoring the Church by *Christ*, the Remembrance of which Benefit did succeed into the Place of the Memory of the Creation ; not by the Tradition of Man, but by the Observation and Appointment of *Christ*, who both on the Day of his Resurrection, and on every 8th Day after, unto his Ascension into Heaven, appear'd unto his Disciples, and came into their Assemblies. And howsoever in *Paradise*, before Man's Fall, the keeping of the *Sabbath* on the 7th Day of the Creation, was not a Ceremony, but an Argument of Perfection ; yet after the Fall it became ceremonial, and subject to Change, in respect of the Restauration by *Christ* : But what of that ? The abrogating the Ceremonies annexed to the *Sabbath*, abolish not the Morality of the Commandment of the *Sabbath* : So that tho' the Ceremonies be abolished, by the Access of the Substance, and the Shadow overshadowed by the Body,



Body, which is *Christ*, yet the holy Rest (which was commanded and kept, before either the *Jews* were a People, or those Ceremonies annexed to the *Sabbath*) still continued as God's perpetual Law, whereby all the Posterity of *Adam* are bound to rest from their ordinary Business, that they may wholly spend every 7th Day in the solemn Worship, and only Service of God their Creator and Redeemer; but in the Substance of the Fourth Commandment, there is not found one Word of any Ceremony.

*Q. What is the Reason that Lupo voranti, in the Beginning of Esop's Fable of the Wolf and Crane, is put in the Ablative Case, and not the Genitive?*

*A.* For the same Reason, perhaps, as *id genus in alia id genus* is put for *ejus generis*, which the best of Criticks yet cannot tell.

*Q. In the Incarnation of Christ, was the Godhead turn'd into the Manhood, or the Manhood into the Godhead?*

*A.* Neither; but the Godhead, as it is the Second Person or Word, assumed unto it the Manhood; that is, the whole Nature of Man, Body and Soul, and all the natural Properties and Infirmities, Sin excepted. The Second Person took not upon him the Person of Man, but the Nature of Man: So that the Human Nature hath no Personal Subsistence of its own (for then there should be two Persons in *Christ*) but it subsists in the Word, the Second Person. For as the Soul and Body make but one Person of Man, so the Godhead and Manhood make but one Person of *Christ*. The two Natures of the Godhead and Manhood are so really united by a Personal Union, that as they can never be separated asunder, so are they not confounded; but remain still distinguished by their several and essential Properties, which they had before they were united. As for Example,

## 36      *The Delphick Oracle.*

the Infiniteness of the divine is not communicated to the human Nature ; nor the Finiteness of the human to the divine Nature. Yet, by reason of the Personal Union, there is such a Communion of the Properties of both Natures, that that which is proper to the one, is sometimes attributed to the other Nature : As that God purchased the Church *with his own Blood*, Acts xx. 28. And that *he will judge the World by that Man whom he hath ordained*, Acts xvii. 31. Hence also it is, that though the Humanity of *Christ* be created, and therefore a finite and limited Nature, and cannot be every where present by actual Position, or local Extension, according to his natural Being, yet because he hath communicated unto it the Personal Subsistence of the Son of God, which is infinite, and without Limitation ; and is so united with God, that it is no where severed from God ; the Body of *Christ*, in respect of his Personal Being, may rightly be said to be every where.

*Q. In what Manner should a Man make his Addresses to God ?*

*A.* In what Manner a Man should make his Addresses to God, we need not trouble our selves to enquire. The Church affords us some Forms for our constant Use, as the *Lord's Prayer*, and the Psalms of *David*, which are also Patterns for us in composing more. Nor should it be the Question, Whether every private Man may, as he finds Occasion in his Family, or his Closet, use Compositions of his own ? But, Whether praying by a Form, or without one, be most acceptable to God, and whether we know it to be so or not ? As to the publick Prayers in the Church, we hope no Man will say, he knows they should not be by Form. Because the Church has appointed them such, and because no-body pretends Scripture has forbid it. And for private and secret Prayers, if the Church  
has



has not forbid their being *ex tempore*, yet the same Reason will hold in both. And if we suppose the Authority of the Church to go for nothing, which has given Forms for the publick, and approved Forms for private Use, when we come to believing, there will be but little Pretence to put them aside. There is (we own) a Difference in being the Mouth of the Congregation, putting up Petitions in the Name of them all, from what a private Man does for himself only, or his Family. And though the Unfitness of extemporary Prayers in the Desk, or at the Altar, will not prove their Unfitness in the Closet or Parlour; yet if it can be made out that they are unfit even here, and in their own Nature chargeable with Irreverence, the Charge will be more strongly against them in the Place which is more particularly sacred. As for Words, when Devotion incites one to pray, who can think Heaven is taken by Force of *Rhetorick*? That varying the Phrase, and changing the Order of the Words, should make our Request more powerful, were they never so much at Command? 'Tis something hard to believe so proper Expressions can be hit upon of a sudden, as those that have been maturely fixed: Or that a Man diving for affecting Epithets, can mind so well what he is about, as if he had nothing to do but to keep himself intent. And if we consider the Language of those who use this Method of praying, we shall too often meet with such as would very ill become them to attribute to the Holy Spirit. It's true, in the Age of Miracles, when *Christianity* was to make its Way, and the Simplicity of Fishermen to be drawn out against Learning and Power, they were promised immediate Instruction what to say: And no doubt the Almighty Hand is not shortned: He can dictate a Prayer as easily as a Defence. But what Reason have we  
to

## 38 *The Delphick Oracle.*

to expect it, when it was never promis'd, and, as we know of, never given? When the other Gifts since ceased, if the Fathers may be trusted; and when those Productions which take the Name of Inspiration have so much of Impertinence and Contradiction in them; and the admired Excellency of one Man above another, is visibly owing to the brighter natural Parts of this, or the Indisposition of that.

*Q. Is it decent to bury the Dead in Churches?*

*A.* It is hard to say, whether Fondness of Custom, or Love of Novelty, betray Men into the most Mistakes. These two Extreams possess the greatest Part of Mankind; which of 'em prevails the farthest, or does the most Mischief, it is somewhat difficult to determine. The best Things are slighted by some for meer Antiquity, though founded upon Authority and Reason; others again maintain a Veneration for whatever Custom has establish'd, tho' founded upon neither. Amongst many Practices that have Prescription to plead, that of burying in Churches seems to some very indecent. It has so long and generally obtain'd, 'twill be reckon'd a Crime, it may be, to disturb it. But when every Body takes the Liberty, what has not only Prescription, but Authority to justify it, we hope we may be excused for making free with this, that is supported by the Tyranny of Custom. The Prescription is not so good, but we know when it was otherwise. Amongst the *Jews* we find no such thing: They had private Burying-places of their own in their Gardens, or elsewhere, and the publick ones we read of, were not in their Place of Worship. In what Age of *Christianity* this Practice crept in does not appear; but it was not, neither could be us'd till the Empire became *Christian*. It's probable 'twas introduc'd by burying in Monasteries, in the Cloysters, or  
other



other Parts remote from the Church it self, where at length it found Admission. We are not here speaking against publick Burying-places, such as the Church-yard, or any other, whether without Doors, or within. If People will have Pyramids built over 'em, let 'em enjoy their Fancy. 'Tis proper and decent that those who die in the same Communion, in the same Hope, who appear'd at the same Worship, and look for the same Resurrection, should have the same publick Repository to keep up the Memory of the Charity in which they lived. What they mean further than this, what farther Advantage it can be to them to lye in the Church it self we cannot conceive, unless it is from the Doctrine of Reliques this Inclination to holy Ground grew ; or that we shall fare the better for the Neighbourhood of the Dead, or be of any Service to the Living. But let People be buried where they please, in any consecrated Ground, we cannot say 'tis indecent ; and we must further declare, it is Injustice that the Office for the Burial of the Dead, appointed by our *Liturgy* us'd in the Church of *England*, should be celebrated on such as are out of her Communion, or un-baptized, or guilty of Suicide or Self-Murder. If it were said on such who live in open Violation of the Laws, this would serve but to harden Men in the Neglect of Religion, to make them trust to a few Death-Bed Prayers and Sighs, and think the Agonies and Regret which the Remembrance of an ill-spent Life, and Horror of Judgment produces, equal to that Repentance which qualifies us for Absolution.

Q. *Was Idleness, or sincere Devotion, the chief Cause of Mens living a retired Life?*

A. He that takes the Pains to search, and the Freedom to place things where they become chargeable, can't help wishing there were a Fashion erected

erected for the suppressing of Idleness. As it is a Nursery for Vice, and contributes so plentifully to the Unhappiness of Mankind; yet it seems to be the top of our Ambition to settle our selves and our Children in the serene State of Indolence, where we shall have nothing to do: As if a Man could think of no Retreat from the Fatigue of Life, but into an Infirmary, where, to pass his Time without Care, he must be subject to the nauseous Smell of Wounds and Ulcers, and be entertain'd with the Groans of his Company. However, we would not be understood to censure a retired Life, which in every Age some of the best Men have taken up. They form'd themselves into Societies, and lived apart from the World in the Exercise of Devotion and Self-Denial. It was, doubtless, highly acceptable, since the Patterns of those recorded in Scripture for the perpetual Mortifications they laid upon themselves, or underwent in Obedience to Authority, are set before us with the highest Commendation, and Promise of Reward. Since it was so much esteemed in the best Ages of *Christianity*, and that which led the Way into Cells and Desarts was Zeal that advanced even to Martyrdom; we find the first of these were such as the Church restrain'd by Censures from offering themselves to die for the Faith. So willingly did they crowd in to attest the Force of their Convictions with their Blood, that nothing less could keep them out of their Persecutors Hands. And being deny'd the Glory of giving their Testimony, till Providence should require it, took this Way of renouncing the World, in Honour of a Religion for which they could not sacrifice too much. In Justice to this Self-denying Zeal, we must, at least, allow it innocent, if it cannot meet with Applause.

Q. *What*



*Q. What Proof has Mankind for the Certainty of a Divine Being existing?*

*A.* The universal Agreement and Consent that has been amongst Mankind, in all Places, Times, and Ages, in this Matter, all concurring in the Existence of a Deity, strongly affirms this Relish. Where was there (by Record or Experience) any People, in any Nation under the Sun, found, that did not pay some Homage to the Notion of a Deity? Where did ever avowed *Atheism* possess any Part of the World, or fix its Habitation? The whole World has ever subscrib'd their Subjection to a superior Being. All the Idolatry that has ever been in the World has been founded in this; for, tho' their Worship has not been rightly directed, and their Homage not regularly paid where it became due, yet this general Precept still lay uppermost in the Spirits of Mankind; That a Worship was to be perform'd, and a Homage to be paid, to somewhat that was before them, and is above them. You may as soon find a Nation without their Souls, as without their Gods: Nay, they would set up a *Leek*, an *Onion*, a *Calf*, or an *Ox*, or any Creature to subject themselves to a supreme Deity by; and make it a Medium to vent that pressing Sense of a Subjection to somewhat above them, rather than not do it. Men would have an Altar to an *unknown God*, rather than none: Which, when they had nothing visible, declares a pure innate Principle to somewhat above them. They were so fill'd with such an Apprehension, that they would have a Deity for every thing; for their Corn and their Wine, and every thing they dealt with. The *Romans*, by that Method, had multiplied their Gods to above thirty thousand; and other Nations not much behind them; which can speak no other thing unto

## 42      *The Delphick Oracle.*

us, than that Men saw somewhat of a Deity in themselves, and every thing else, under whose Rule and Disposal all things lay subjected, and in whom they liv'd, and mov'd, and had their Being: Nor would they undertake any thing, in Peace or War, private or publick, without a previous Application to a Deity; whose Right to dispose of them and all their Actions, they did fully own and assent to.

*Q* How many Religions have there been in the World that ever pretended to a System of Supernatural Revelation?

*A.* Three only; viz. the Jewish Religion, the Christian Religion, and the Mahometan Religion. The Matters of Fact of both the former have had all the Concurrence of human Testimony; and no Man can shew, that in the Ages wherein they were transacted, they were ever deny'd by any. But the last, which is the Mahometan Religion, was openly discovered in that Age to be a Cheat; and the World is as well assur'd of Mahomet's being an Impostor, as they are of the Falshood of the Religion he framed; and that by the Testimony of the Age wherein he liv'd. Does not the Story of that Age tell us, how he began his Religion? What Advantage he took by the Disease he had of the *Epilepsia* or Falling-Sickness, to tell Men, whenever he was in a Fit, that he was in a Rapture, and conversed with the Angel *Gabriel*? How one *Sergius* of *Alexandria* (an Apostate, and discontented Monk) coming to him, perswaded him to form the *Alcoran*, by adding such Matters out of the *Old* and *New-Testament*, to his own Devices, as might bring in *Gentiles*, *Jews*, and *Christians* to his Religion? The Story of that Age assures us fully of the whole Cheat of his Life, and of his Promise at his Death (in Imitation, no doubt,



## The Delphick Oracle. 43

doubt, of *Christ*) to rise again within four Days ; in which Time he became putrified and noisome, and his Disciples, at last, forced to bury him. The wisest and best Men, at that very Time, opposed him, and made his Drunkenness and horrible Debauchery notorious and evident. Whoever consults the Principle of his Religion, will plainly enough perceive, the Design was to set up himself, and engage all Parties to him. The *Alcoran* may be rightly abridg'd into these 8 Principles.

1. *Every one ought to believe that God is a Great God, and Mahomet is his Prophet, Abraham the Friend of God, Moses the Messenger of God, and Christ the Breath of God, of whom the Virgin Mary grew with Child by smelling of a Rose, and was delivered of him at her Breasts.*

2. *Every Man ought to marry, to increase the Sectaries of Mahomet.*

3. *Every Man must give of his Wealth to the Poor.*

4. *Every Man must make his Prayers five times a Day.*

5. *Every Man must keep a Lent one Month in a Year.*

6. *Must be obedient to his Parents.*

7. *Thou shalt not kill.*

8. *Do unto others as thou wouldest be done unto thy self.*

'Tis not hard to perceive whence this counterfeit Coin was fetch'd ; and where the original and legitimate Stamp is to be found. He would induce the Good of all Religions, so he might be the chief Prophet. The whole Business then of *Mahomet* was a grand notorious Cheat. And though it has possessed so much of the World since, yet we have an abundant Assurance, from the Testimony of the

## 44      *The Delphick Oracle.*

same Age wherein he liv'd, that it was so, and the Particulars of it exactly handed down to us.

We are able to trace all false Religions and pretended Deities to their Original. The World is fill'd with a sufficient Account of the Deceit and Fabulousness of them all. To give one clear Instance of it, *Saturn* was the most antient God the Heathens had amongst them. *Tertullian* says this of him : " You have (he speaking then to the *Romans*)  
 " no God more antient than *Saturn*. Not any of  
 " your Historians ever spake of him otherwise  
 " than a Man. If we seek for Proof drawn out of  
 " publick Records, and Monuments, we cannot  
 " meet faithfuller, or more certain, than here in  
 " *Italy* it self ; where we learn, that *Saturn*, after  
 " many Voyages, landed in this Province, while  
 " he was coming from *Greece*, and was receiv'd by  
 " one *Janns*. The Mountain, where he dwelt,  
 " was call'd *Saturnian* : The City he founded carries even until now, the same Appellation. It was  
 " he who first found out the Invention of Tables,  
 " and signing or making Money with the Image of  
 " Princes : From whence it comes, that the publick Treasure is placed, by you, in his Temple.  
 " Now if *Saturn* were a Man, he was the Son of another Man ; and being his Father was a Man, you cannot say, he was the Son of Heaven and Earth. But *Saturn*, in Person, surprizing the  
 " Inhabitants of several Places, where he landed ;  
 " and they not knowing whence he came, pass'd  
 " afterward for a divine Person, and a God. *Apol. cap. 8.*" In the same Manner, in the 9th Chapter, he shews them the Original of *Jupiter*, *Bacchus*, *Ceres*, *Minerva*, and the rest of their Gods ; and how they came first to be so accounted ; and tells them, " If *Bacchus* were therefore made a God  
 " with them, because he first taught to plant Vines,  
 they



“ they used *Lucullus* ill, in not making him a God  
 “ too, who first planted Cherry-Trees in *Italy*,  
 “ and brought them from the Kingdom of *Pontus*.  
 So clear and full an Account have we of all those  
 things, and so little Reason has Man to be deceiv’d  
 with them, that he cannot be deceiv’d, unless he  
 hath a mind so to be.

Q. *What is that which People call a Lightning before Death?*

A. That which we usually call a Lightning before Death, we take to be but only the Soul’s finding of its former Liberty, when it’s going to be loosen’d from the Body, to be enlarg’d and set out of Prison, which makes it so chearful in some, before its Separation from the Terrestrial Mansion of Clay.

Q. *What is Providence?*

A. ’Tis what the *Egyptians* decypher it in their *Hieroglyphicks*, truly *Oculus in sceptrō*, a rational guiding and ruling all Affairs in the World; ’tis *ipsa ratio divina in summo principe constituta*; sic inter ordinandorum in finem; that which in Man is call’d Prudence, in God is call’d Providence; the right turning and regulating of all Circumstances, and making them to conspire and contribute to his own End and Glory.

Q. *If, inter bruta silent leges, why does the Levitical Law put them to death upon some Occasions?*

A. Why truly there is no *turpe* nor *honestum* among Beasts, no Duty nor Obedience to be expected from them, no Praise nor Dispraise due to them, no Punishment nor Reward to be distributed amongst them: But as for those Laws given to the *Jews*, where sometimes the Beast also was to be put to death, the Meaning thereof was not this, that the Beast was guilty of a Crime, and had violated a Law, and therefore was to be condemn’d and put  
 to

to death; but it was in order to the Welfare and Happiness of Men; for *bestia cum homine concumbens*, was to be ston'd, partly because it was the Occasion of so foul a Fact, and so fatal Punishment unto Man, and partly that the Sight and Presence of the Object might not repeat so prodigious a Crime in the Thoughts of Men, nor renew the Memory of it, nor continue the Disgrace of him that died for it.

Q. *What is Conscience?*

A. Conscience is a Thing that sometimes does embrace only the Shadow of a Law, and does engage Men, though erroneously, to the Observation of that which was never dictated by any just legislative Power. Nor is it content to glance only at what's to come, but, *Janus* like, it has a double Aspect, and so looks back to what's past, as to call Men to a strict Account for every Violation of the Law of Nature; which Law is so accurate, as to oblige all Mankind, not only *ad actum*, but *ad modum* also: It looks as well to the inward Form and Manner, as to the Materiality and Bulk of outward Actions; for every thing owes thus much Kindness and Courtesy to itself, not only to put forth such Acts as are essential and intrinsical to its own Welfare, but also to delight in them, and to fulfil them with all possible Freeness and Alacrity, with the greatest Intenseness and Complacency. Again, we may say, Conscience is a Book within every Man's Breast, and is the Pen of a ready Writer, for it can write as fast as the Soul can dictate. *Calamum in corde tingit*, and with an accurate Pencil it can give him a full Pourtraicture of his most closetted Behaviour, of his most reserved Actions, of his most retired Motions; and though there be a Curtain drawn over them here, yet they shall be made very apparent. God shall give Conscience




## *The Delphick Oracle.* 47

ence an *Imprimatur*, and such Works as a Man would have suppress'd, shall be publish'd to the Eyes of Men and Angels, and the λόγος κρῖνον shall pass a Censure upon them.

*F I N I S.*





N. B. All Persons that shall propose Questions to the Gentlemen of the Society of the *Delphick Oracle*, may send them to J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane*, where Letters will be taken in, but not without Post paid.

